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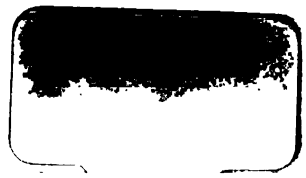


COELIA;

CONTAINING

TWENTY SONNETS

BY

W. PERCY.

FIRST PRINTED IN 1594.

KENT:
Printed at the private Press of Lee Priory;
BY JOHN WARWICK.

1818.

280. l. 10.

PREFACE.

MR. PARK, to whom I owe the transcript of the present rare work, observes that "PERCY's SONNETS have scarcely any plea for reproduction except their rarity. They are void of natural thought, of pleasing sentiment, of graceful metre, or even of grammatical propriety; and too much resemble the exotic verbiage and crude metre of that worthless production called *Soothern's Diana*, which Puttenham in his *Art of Poesy* fitly termed "mingle mangle;" and which Mr. Steevens in the *European Magazine* branded with strong derision. The brevity of Percy's work is it's chief recommendation. His Sonnets were imparted to the world as "toys" indeed, and as a pledge for the produce of a poem "more fruitful and ponderous:" but the pledge, it is very probable, was never redeemed."

Perhaps my friend Mr. Park has been a little too

severe on the present occasion. PERCY's rhymes are sometimes dissonant; and both his thoughts and expressions quaint and laboured and obscure; which may be partly attributed to the fashion of the day in which he wrote. On the other hand some of the Sonnets are as good and as harmonious as those of his cotemporaries. They affect what perhaps was then considered the court style, and the tone of high-bred literature.

No particulars are known of the Author of COELIA. A person of both his names was second of the seven brothers of *Henry Percy, ninth Earl of Northumberland,* a nobleman who died in 1632, aged 70; and whose imprisonment for fifteen years in the Tower on account of the Gunpowder Plot, has rendered his story remarkable.

WILLIAM PERCY, *third* son of Henry, eighth Earl of Northumberland, is recorded as a man of learning and genius, who lived retired at Oxford many years; and dying there, was buried in Christ-Church Cathedral May 28, 1648, having never married.*

* See A. Wood's MSS. Ashmol. Oxon. 8466. f. 4.

Mr. Garrard speaks of him in the Strafford Papers, ii. 168, under the date of 1638, in the following words: "He lives obscurely in Oxford, and drinks nothing but ale."

From all these circumstances it is very probable that this person was the same who was author of the present Sonnets.

The conjecture that the Poem addressed by Percy to Parthenophil was intended for Barnaby Barnes (See *Cens. Lit.* iii. 374), is further confirmed by the following Poem, unnoticed by Ritson, prefixed to Barnes's "Four Books of Offices," 1606.

"*To Master Barnabe Barnes, this Madrigal upon his Book.*

If all the world were sought from *Malta* to *Mone*,
From candid *Gaul*, to black-brow'd *Calicute;*
No frame more various mought have been made one
In every joint, or point like absolute:

For as some spirits while they have been attent
On States of Princes, and on earthly right,
Have follow'd the wordly* side, with that intent,
And yet unmindful of the highest sprite.

Others again (too much I ween yblent
With heavenly zeal and with religion)
Have for the same the secular forwent:
So if a mean there be (as mean but one
To twine the crosier with the sword atone)
O let me then (with license) to avow
'Twill, right Paladine be, by only you.

W. Percy.

Musophilus.

Spes calamo occidit.

* Qu. *worldly?*

SONNETS

TO

THE FAIREST COELIA.

Parve, nec invideo, sine me liber ibis ad illam,
Hei mihi quòd domino non licet ire tuo.

Trist. i.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY ADAM ISLIP,

FOR W. P.

1594.

TO THE READER.

Courteous Reader,

HEREAS I was fully determined to have concealed my Sonnets, as things privy to myself; yet of courtesy having lent them to some, they were secretly committed to the Press, and almost finished, before it came to my knowledge. Wherefore making, as they say, "virtue of necessity," I did deem it most convenient to prœpose mine Epistle, only to beseech you to account of them as of toys and amorous devices; and ere long, I will impart unto the world another Poem, which shall be both more fruitful and ponderous. In the mean while, I commit these, as a pledge, unto your indifferent censures. London, 1594.

W. PERCY.

SONNETS.

SONNET I.

UDGED by my goddess' doom to endless pain,
Lo! here I ope my sorrow's passion,
That every silly eye may view most plain
A sentence given on no occasion.
If that by chance they fall most fortunate
Within those cruel hands that did enact it;
Say but, alas! he was too passionate;
My doom is past, nor can be now unacted.
So mayst thou see I was a spotless lover,
And grieve withal that ere thou dealt so sore;
Unto remorse who goes about to move her,
Pursues the winged winds, and tills the shore.
Lovely is her semblance, hard is her heart,
Wavering is her mind, sure is her dart.

SONNET II.

H! happy hour; and yet unhappy hour,
When first by chance I had my goddess viewed;
Then first I tasted of the sweetest sour,
Wherewith the cup of Cypria is embrewed.
For gazing firm, without suspicion,
Love, coop'd behind the charet of her eye,
Justly to school my bold presumption,
Against my heart did let an arrow fly:
'Fair Sir,' quoth he, 'to practise have you nought
But to be gazing on divinity?
Before you part, your leer you shall be taught:'
With that at once he made his arrows hie.
Imperious God, I did it not to love her,
Ah! stay thy hand; I did it but to prove her.

SONNET III.

ROVE her?—ah no: I did it but to love her;
Then shoot amain, dread liege, I stand unarmed;
Altho' no hope that any thing may move her,
Some ease it is to be by beauty charmed.
Then quick, my liege; then quick, and end thy game,
That all the world may see how thou hast plagued us:
Then cruel she shall view, unto her blame,
That all men be not feeble as they've term'd us.
May be, my words may win contrition,
If not my words, my sobs: if not my sobs,
My tears may move her to compassion:
If tears do fail,—my tears, my words, my throbs.
Ay me, ah no!—tears, words, throbs; all in vain;
She scorns my dole, and smileth at my pain.

SONNET IV.

H, heavenly Cœlia! as fair as virtuous,
The only mirror of true chastity!
Have I been 'gainst thy godhead impious,
That thus am guerdon'd for my fealty?
Have I not shed upon thine ivory shrine
Huge drops of tears, with large eruptions?
Have I not offered, evening and at prime,
My sighs, my psalms of invocations?
What be men's sighs, but calls of guilefulness?
They shew, dear Love! true proof of firmity.
What be your tears but mere ungraciousness?
Tears only plead for our simplicity
When all strike mute—she says it is my duty,
And claims as much as to her Deity.

SONNET V.

FAIR queen of Gnidos! come, adorn my forehead,
And crown me with the laurel emperor;
Ió thrice sing, Ió about thy poet;
Lo, in my goddess I am conqueror.
For once by chance, not sure or wittingly,
Upon my foot her tender foot alighted;
With that she pluck'd it off full wimbely,
As though the very touch had her affrighted.
Dear Mistress! will you deal so cruelly,
To 'prive me of so small a benefit?
What! do you jet it off so nimbely,
As though in very sooth a snake had bit it?
Yea, bit, perhaps indeed: Oh, Muses, blab you?
Not a word, picannets; or I will gag you.

SONNET VI.

OOD God! how senseless be we paramours,
So proudly on a nothing for to vaunt it?
We cannot reap the meanest of all favours,
But by and by, we think our suit is granted.
Had ye observed two planets which then mounted,
Two certain signs of indignation,
Ye would have deemed rather both consented,
To turn all hopes to desperation.
Then can you waver so inconstantly,
To shew first love, and then disdainfulness?
First for to bring a dram of courtesy;
Then mix it with an ounce of scornfulness.
No, no: the doubt is answered certainly;
She trod by chance, she trod not wittingly.

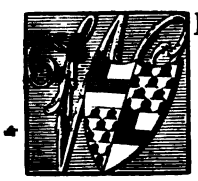
SONNET VII.

IF it be sin, so dearly for to love thee,
Come, bind my hands—I am thy prisoner:
Yet if a spark of pity may but move thee,
First, sit upon the cause commissioner.
The same well heard, may wrest incontinent.
Two floods from forth those rocks of adamant,
Which, streaming down with force impatient,
May melt the breast of my fierce Rhadamant.
Dearest cruel! the cause I see dislikes thee,
On us thy brows thou bends so direfully:
Enjoin me penance whatsoever likes thee;
Whate'er it be, I'll take it thankfully.
Yet since for love it is I am thy bondman,
Good Cælia! use me like a gentleman.

SONNET VIII.

STRIKE up, my lute, and ease my heavy cares,
The only solace to my passions:
Impart unto the airs thy pleasing airs,
More sweet than heavenly consolations.
Rehearse the songs of forlorn amorous,
Driven to despair by dames tyrannical.
Of Alpheus' loss, of woes of Troilus,
Of Rowland's rage, of Iphis' funeral.
Ay me! what warbles yields mine instrument?
The bases shriek as though they were amiss:
The means, no means; too sad the merriment:
No, no: the music good, but thus it is—
I loath both means, merriment, diapasons,
So she and I may be but unisons.

SONNET IX.



WHILST others' ween sole hopes to be a salve,
Sole hopes I find to be my corrosives:
Whilst others found in hopes an harbour have,
From hopes I feel a sea of sorrows rise.
For when mild hopes should ease my raging fires,
They fester more, in that they are but hopes:
Then whilst I touch the port of my desires,
A storm of hate doth burst mine anchor ropes.
Were I but once resolved certainly,
Soon should I know which point my helm to steer;
But she denies my suit most womanly,
As hidden documents for us to hear.
Lo! this the cause my hell forsakes me never.
Tell me, dear sweet! thus shall I live for ever?

SONNET X.

A MYSTERY.

TO win the fort how oft have I assay'd,
Wherein the heart of my fair Mistress lies?
What rams, what mines, what plots have I not laid?
Yet still am frighted from mine enterprize.
First from the leads of that proud citadel
Do foulder forth two fiery culverines.
Under two red coats keep the larum bell,
For fear of close or open venturings.
Before the gates Scorn, Fear, and Modesty,
Do toss amain their pikes---but 'bove them all
Pudicity wields her staff most manfully,
Guarded with blocks that keep me from the wall.
Yet if this staff will 'fore me clear the way,
In spite of all, I'll bear my Dame away.

SONNET XI.

TO POLYXENA.

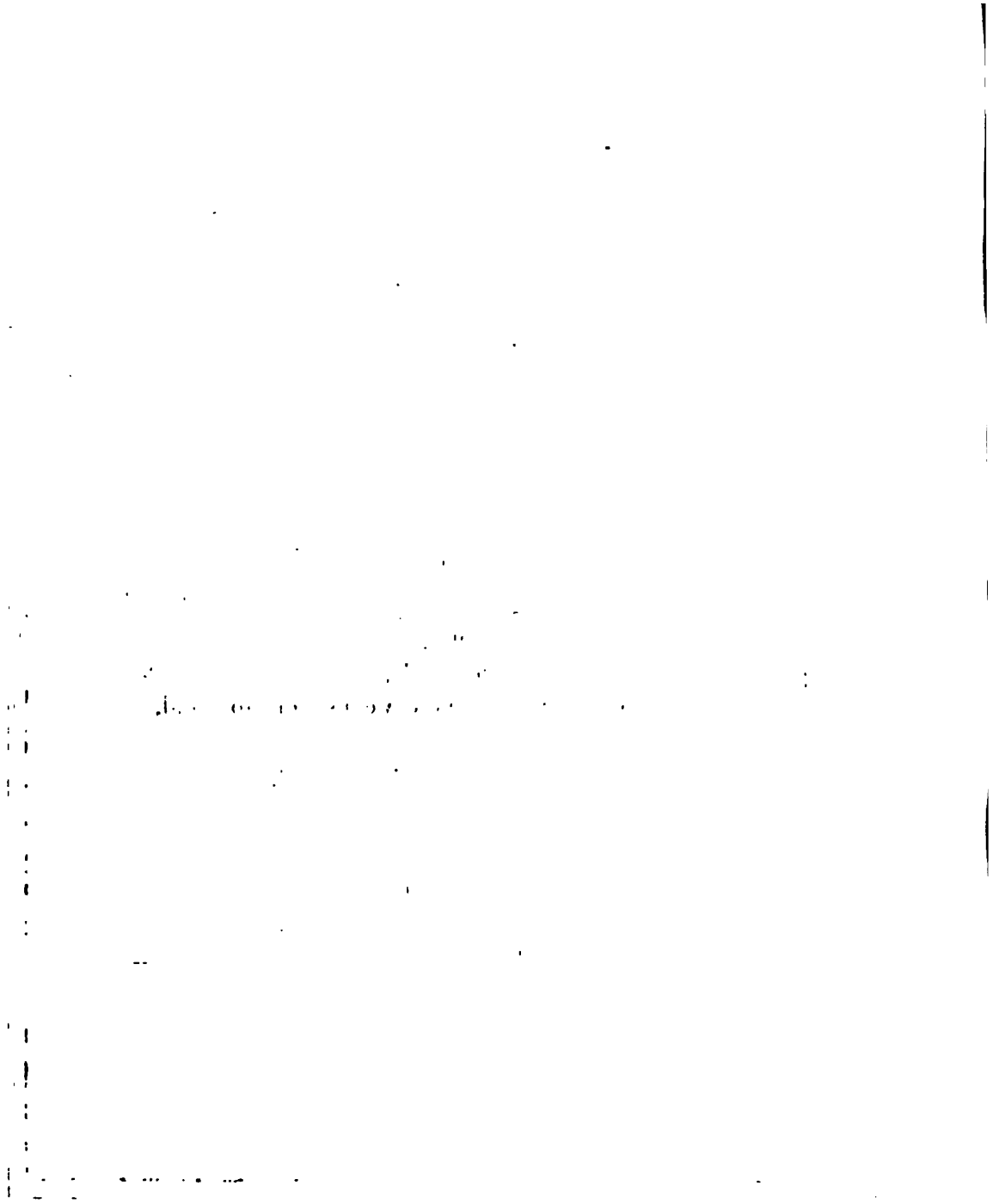
F all the women which of yore have been,
Alcest for virtue may be glorified;
For courage Teuce', for Sparta's queen,
For all in one Polyxen' deified.
If true it be, by old philosophy,
These souls to have since destin entered
To other bodies of like sympathy,
Thou art the last of these metemps'chosed.
Thy courage wondrous, thy virtues peerless,
Thy features have the fairest ladies blamed;
Then, if thou scorn'st not such a monarchess,
Henceforth by reason good thou shalt be named,
Nor Teuce', nor Alcest, nor fair Helena,
Thou shalt be named—my dear Polyxena.

SONNET XII.

CELIA! of all sweet courtesies resolve me,
For wished grace how must I now be doing,
Since Ops, the complet'st frame which did absolve thee,
Hath made each parcel to my sole undoing?
Those wires, which should thy corpse to mine unite,
Be rays to daze us from so near approach:
Thine eyne, which should my nighted sailors light,
Be shot, to keep them off with foul reproach.
Those ruddy plumes, embrew'd with heavenly food,
When I would suck them, twine to driest coral;
And when I couch between her lily buds,
They surge like frothy water mounts above all:
Surely, they were all made unto good uses,
But she them all untowardly abuses.

SONNET XIII.

ITH grievous thoughts and weighty cares opprest,
One day I went to Venus' fanacle;
Of Cyprian dreams, which did me sore molest,
To be resolved by certain oracle.
No sooner was I past the temple's gate,
But from the shrine, where Venus wont to stand,
I saw a lady, fair and delicate,
Did beckon to me with her ivory hand.
Weening she was the goddess of the fane,
With cheerful looks I towards bent my pace;
Soon when I came, I found unto my bane,
A gorgon shadow'd under Venus' face.
Whereat affright—when back I would be gone,—
I stood transformed to a speechless stone.



SONNET XIV.

HEN once I saw that no entreats would move her,
All means I sought to be delivered:
Against white Cupid, and his golden mother,
In high contempt base words I uttered.
When both, from clouds of her bright firmament,
With heavy griefs and strong disdain surmounted,
Upon my thoughts and me did shoot revengement,
Whilst in our highest prides we were amounted.
Nor be they pleased to give us all these wounds,
To make me languish as a dying liver;
But from her orbs they fling her firebronds;
Thereby to quite consume both heart and liver.
Pardon, dread powers! pardon my rash offence,
By heaven's bright veil, 'twas 'gainst my conscience.

SONNET XV.

ECHO.

HAT is the Fair to whom so long I plead? *dead.*
What is her face so angel-like? *angelic.*
Then unto saints in mind she's not unlike; *unlike.*
What may be hoped of one so evil natured? *hatred.*
O then my woes how shall I ope best? *hope-best.*
Then she is flexible— *she is flexible.*
Fie no, it is impossible— *possible.*
About her straight then only our best— *you're best.*
How must I first her loves to me approve? *prove.*
How if she say, I may not kiss her? *kiss her.*
For all her bobs I must then bear or miss her? *yes, sir.*
Then will she yield at length to love? *to love.*
E'en so? *E'en so.* By Narcisse is it true? *true.*
Of thine honesty? *I.* Adieu. *adieu.*

SONNET XVI.

HAT may be thought of thine untowardness,
That movest still at every motion?
What may be hoped of so strange uncouthness,
That scorns all vows, scorns all devotion?
If I but sue, thou wouldst relieve mine anguish,
Two threatening arks thou bendest rigorously:
Then if I swear thy love doth make me languish,
Thou turn'st away, and smilest scornfully:
Then if I wish thou wouldst not tyrannize,
Of tyránny thou makest but a mockery;
And if I weep, my tears thou dost despise,
And if I stir, thou threatenest battery.
Frown on, smile on, mock me, despise me, threat me;
All shall not make me leave for to entreat thee.

SONNET XVII.

RELENT, my dear yet unkind Cœlia!
At length relent, and give my sorrows end;
So shall I keep my long-wish'd holyday,
And set a trophy on a froward friend.
Nor tributes, nor imposts, nor other duties
Demand I will, as lawful conqueror;
Duties, tributes, imposts, unto thy beauties
Myself will pay, as yielded servitor.
Then quick relent,---thyself surrender us:
'Brave sir! and why (quoth she) must I relent?'
'Relent! (cried I) thyself doth conquer us.'
When eftsoons with my proper instrument,'
She cut me off---ay me! and answered
'You cannot conquer and be conquered.'

SONNET XVIII.

CANNOT conquer and be conquered!
Then whole myself I yield unto thy favour.
Behold my thoughts float in an ocean battered
To be cast off, or wafted to thine harbour.
If of the same thou wilt then take acceptance,
Stretch out thy fairest hand as flag of peace;
If not, no longer keep us in attendance,
But all at once thy fiery shafts release!
If thus I die—an honest cause of love,
Will of my fates the rigour mitigate;
Those gracious eyne, which will a Tartar move,
Will prove my case the less unfortunate.
Although my friends may rue my chance for ay,
It will be said—he died for Cœlia.

SONNET XIX.

IT shall be said—I died for Cœlia!
Then quick, thou grizly man of Erebus,
Transport me hence unto Proserpina,
To be adjudged as wilful amorous:
To be hung up within the liquid air,
For all the sighs which I in vain have wasted;
To be through Lethe's waters cleansed fair,
For those dark clouds which have my looks o'ercasted:
To be condemn'd to everlasting fire,
Because at Cupid's fire I wilful brent me;
And to be clad for deadly dumps in mire,
Among so many plagues which shall torment me.
One solace I shall find when I am over;
It will be known—I died a constant lover.

SONNET XX.

ECEIVE these writs, my sweet and dearest friend!
The lively patterns of my lifeless body;
Where thou shalt find, in hebon pictures pen'd,
How I was meek, but thou extremely bloody.
I'll walk forlorn along the willow shades,
Alone complaining of a ruthless dame:
Where'er I pass, the rocks, the hills, the glades,
In piteous yells shall sound her cruel name.
There I will wail the lot which fortune sent me,
And make my moans unto the savage ears;
The remnant of the days which Nature lent me,
I'll spend them all, concealed, in ceaseless tears.
Since unkind fates permit me not t' enjoy her,
No more (burst eyes!) I mean for to annoy her.

TO

PARTHENOPHIL;*

Upon his Laya and Parthenophe.

MADRIGAL.

HEN first I heard thy loves to Laya,
I wish'd the gods to turn it to good hap:
Yet since I hear thy blessed flight away,
I joy thy chance for fear of afterclap.
Unwily man! why couldst not keep thee there,
But must with Parthenoph' thee 'gain entrap?
I little rue thy well deserved tears,
The beast once 'scaped will ever shun the trap.
What tell'st thou me by spells th' hast won thy dear?
Believe her, friend, no more then Laya past:
Charm'd love endures but whilst the charm doth last.

* This probably was Barnabe Barnes, whose Parthenophil and Parthenophe, inscribed to his dearest friend, M. William Percy, Esq. in 1593, is now said to be in the Duke of Devonshire's possession. *See Beloe's notice of it, when the Bishop of Rochester's.* Two Sonnets by Barnes occur in *Pierce's Supererogation by Gab. Harvey*, dated June 1593.

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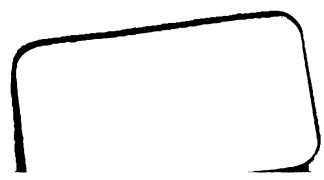
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